

November 2010

How GTL Can Kill You

Allison Butler
Iowa State University

Laurel Scott
Iowa State University

Amy Simmonds
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Journalism Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Butler, Allison; Scott, Laurel; and Simmonds, Amy (2010) "How GTL Can Kill You," *Ethos*: Vol. 2011 , Article 15.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2011/iss1/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.





how **GTL** can kill you

By ALLISON BUTLER
Photography LAUREL SCOTT
Design AMY SIMMONDS

Buff muscles, fitted shirts, rigidly-sculpted hair, perfect tans — what's not to love about these party-hardy boys featured on MTV's hit show "Jersey Shore"? It'd sure be a wake up call to see them in even 10 years. If everyone lived like they do, everyone would die. Well maybe not die, but their lifestyle definitely does some irreversible damage stemming from their daily routine of GTL, which stands for gym, tanning, laundry. As ridiculous as this may seem, a lot of college students are following on the trail blazed by Ronnie, The Situation, Pauly D and Vinny.

"The only thing we care about is gettin' girls and going to the gym."

— Mike 'The Situation' Sorrentino

Working out has become an everyday activity not only for television stars, but for college students as well. New addictions are perpetually popping up because of the example they set. Gymorexia, a new word populated by Generation Y, has become a well-known example. Urban Dictionary sums it up as "someone that will eat whatever they desire with no regard to the nutritional content and rationalize it by going to the gym later and engaging in hours of strenuous exercise to 'work off' over-indulgences in food."

Jeff Barton, owner of Fitness World and a personal trainer, advises doing something everyday. He says this doesn't mean hitting the gym hard for hours; it can be as simple as a brisk walk. When asked if he thought working out too much was a negative, Barton responds, "It's a big misconception that working out is the key to a better body and all that, which is kind of true, but it's a little bit of a half-truth. Rest is the key; that's when all the change

.....

gym•or•ex•ia [jim-uh-**rek**-see-uh] **noun** - person who will eat whatever they desire with no regard to the nutritional content and rationalize it by going to the gym later and engaging in hours of strenuous exercise to "work off" overindulgences in food.



occurs. If you don't have rest, you are not gonna get the results you want."

Austin Ruter, junior in kinesiology and health, works out four to five times a week and takes a series of supplements including whey protein, waxy maize (a carbohydrate), a multivitamin, ZMA and L-Arginine. He also takes natural testosterone boosters on a four-week cycle. He

doesn't admit to being gymorexic, but he feels gymorexia is a real problem on this campus and people can "get addicted to the blood and sweat that they put in."

Barton believes working out becomes a problem when you are prioritizing it instead of important things in life, such as relationships, family, friends or work. "You just end up getting into a rhythm,

day to day, and you feel like something is missing if you don't go one day," he says.

Barton says the media, including Jersey Shore, has a role here. "I think the media does influence working out. You see these guys, and they are all ripped, and if that's what they are saying is what you need to do [GTL] to get that body then, well, you better do it!"

tan•or•ex•ia [tan-uh-rek-see-uh] noun - often used to describe a condition in which a person participates in excessive outdoor sun tanning or excessive use of other skin tanning methods (such as tanning beds) to achieve a darker skin complexion because they perceive themselves as unacceptably pale

“My bronzer’s leaking off my face!”

— Nicole ‘Snooki’ Polizzi

Tanning is the second component of the unsettling GTL formula. Indoor tanning has become so popular today that negatives associated with a lifetime in the sun are now showing up in young people. Dr. Kathy Cook, board certified dermatologist at Skin Solutions Dermatology in Ames, says she sees 25-year-olds come into her office already showing signs of premature aging. These signs include wrinkles, fine lines, more heavily freckling and other indications of sun damage. Skin damage occurs the first time people tan, even just once.

The revised health care bill passed in March includes a new 10 percent tax on indoor tanning services.

IN GENERAL.—The term ‘indoor tanning service’ means a service employing any electronic product designed to incorporate one or more ultraviolet lamps and intended for the irradiation of an individual by ultraviolet radiation, with wavelengths in air between 200 and 400 nanometers, to induce skin tanning.”

Originally there was a 10 percent tanning tax along with a 5 percent tax on cosmetic surgery, but the latter was named exempt from the tax due to lobbying of the American Medical Association. The tax is to help compensate for the cost of melanoma in health care. Now, even after the exemption of cosmetic surgery, the tanning tax is expected to generate \$2.7 billion.

Nicole Polizzi, better known as Snooki, the “Jersey Shore” star famous for her perfected hair pouf, rephrased the tanning tax in her own words saying, “I don’t go tanning anymore because Obama put a 10 percent tax on tanning. I feel like he did that intentionally for us, like McCain would never put a 10 percent tax on tanning. Because he is pale and he would probably wanna be tanned.”

McCain responded to Snooki in a tweet: “U r right, I would never tax your tanning bed! Pres Obama’s tax/spend policy is quite The Situation. But I do rec wearing sunscreen!”

Not surprisingly, tanning salon owners, like Ali Tiernan of Simply Tastic in Ankeny, are heated over the new fee. “I don’t know why they think that

a 10 percent [increase] in the tanning industry is going to make [the government] more money?” gripes Tiernan. “With the drop in sales and the drop in customers, it isn’t looking profitable.”

When tanning salons in Ames were approached regarding the tanning tax, they refused to talk, saying their store owners and corporate heads were not allowing them to talk about it. Some even abruptly hung up, as if the mere reminder of the tax ignites a bitterness.

Salons are taking different approaches to handling the tax. Some salons are paying out of pocket for the tax from their bottom line (in other words, they are taking the increase in price out of their own profits and not charging customers) while others have their customers pick up the slack like a sales tax.

Simply Tastic chose not to take it from their bottom line. Tiernan claims the tax hit her salon hard, forcing her to fire employees to try to make up for the decrease in revenue. She adds, “There was a lot of talk of absorbing the tax and taking it on their bottom line. But then, people don’t know about it [the tax] and they need to know about it, so we chose not to do that. That [decision] was a common opinion in the industry (not to absorb it). If you absorb it, people don’t care.”

Planet Beach, also in Ankeny, chose the opposite approach. Since the tax was implemented on July 1, Planet Beach has been swallowing the 10 percent increase on their bottom line. Tami Wayman, spa director at Planet Beach, thinks tanning salons are being targeted because “[the government] had to find some way to [make up for the health care reform’s cost.] There are a lot of doctors out there that believe tanning is a very negative thing, and they will tell their patients not to tan... so [the government] is gonna tax them because they are [tanning].”

Another obstacle tanning is always facing is its negative effect on tanners’ skin, which is part of the idea of a “sin tax” on tanning — discouraging people from the dangerous activity while still allowing them to take part in it. Cook explains how tanning and light sources function. “Tanning beds use mainly UVA [rays] but some UVB has been measured. UVA will tan first without burning if not overdone, and that is why people erroneously feel it is safer than UVB.”

The rays from tanning beds differ from how the sun’s rays work. “In nature, there is a spectrum of wavelengths,” Cook says. “UVC doesn’t really penetrate

the earth; UVA and B both do. The ozone layer blocks out the UVC; the visible light reaches the earth. Because UVA penetrates deeper than UVB, people tend to think of it as a safe tan, but any tanning damages the skin.”

Cook explained there is now a link between UV tanning and melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer. Tanning in the natural sunlight puts a person at an increased risk, but tanning in UV light poses a substantially higher risk. Cook says melanoma most commonly has to be surgically removed with a large incision; melanoma when caught early and excised is curable, but metastatic melanoma, which means it has spread to other parts of the body, is “pretty much a death sentence if that happens because very few survive. So it’s a scary thing; it’s such a simple thing to help cut your risk — don’t tan.”

What does it mean when our skin starts to tan? “The melanin, the color of the skin, is increased in production in response to the sunlight damage,” Cook says. “It’s trying to shade the nucleus of the cell to prevent UV light from striking it and causing abnormalities.”

There are some safe alternatives to the traditional form of artificial tanning. Products such as daily moisturizers with gradual tanners are inexpensive, as well as spray tans. Spray tans are not included in the tanning tax and have no long-term negative effects.

So just because the meatheads on “Jersey Shore” endorse excessive tanning and working out doesn’t mean it’s healthy. Keep in mind, they are the same who said: “These are rules to live by, shave last minute, haircut the day-of, maybe some tanning and the gym. You gotta do the guido handbook.”

While there are definite negatives to the “G and T” of GTL, there isn’t really a negative to the L, laundry, component. If you are going to emulate anything from these guys, let it be how often they launder their clothing and not the destruction of their bodies.

TOP 5 types of cancer for 15-29 year olds

1. Lymphoma
2. Skin
3. Testicular
4. Endocrine
5. Ovarian

— SEER Cancer Statistics Review